



## jobs for the 21st Century

### chapter seven

#### Introduction

To compete as a nation in today's global economy requires each country to recognize and understand their natural competitive advantage. For the United States, our competitive advantage can be traced back over 100 years to a time when Bell Telephone, Ford Motor Company, and the Wright Brothers flying machines revolutionized communications and the way we interact with the world. One hundred years later, that process continues, only now it is software and micro-processors and mp-3 players that are on the cutting edge. At the turn of the last century, we called the pioneers of those technologies inventors. Today, we have an additional name for them—innovators.

It is the constant innovation created by the United States that has pushed us to the leadership of the world economy, and it is this continuing innovative spirit that will keep us on top through the next 100 years. Great innova-

tions do not happen though, without three key advantages already in place:

- Investment
- Infrastructure
- Talent

Conditions that foster investment and infrastructure can be brought about through a combination of market-friendly business conditions and wise community development practices. But the creation and fostering of talent, the most important of our three advantages, requires more.

During his Administration, President George W. Bush has recognized the vital role that talent plays in our economy and has set an agenda that will produce, attract and maintain the most talented workforce in the world. This agenda has three primary goals:

1. Help our workforce adapt to change, and for that, we need a more agile system of training, support and portable benefits;
2. Stimulate a next generation of Americans skilled in science, math, and engineering, as well as in writing and language skills; and
3. Become a magnet for the best global talent.

**President Bush has set a goal to *double the number of workers receiving job training through significant reforms to the major Federal worker training grant programs. The 2005 Budget provides \$23 billion for job training and employment assistance. This is \$500 million (2.3 percent) more than in 2004 and \$2.5 billion (12.5 percent) more than in 2001.***

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) focuses on the first agenda item: *Helping our workforce adapt to change.*

The federal government invests \$23 billion in employment and training programs to support workforce development. Of that, more than \$15 billion in services and programs are delivered through a nationwide network of more than 3,500 One-Stop Career Centers. And, of that, about \$11 billion is managed by ETA in the Department of Labor.

President Bush believes that these resources must be more effectively and efficiently used to ensure American workers have the skills needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy and American businesses can access the skilled workers they need in order to thrive and create new jobs.

To accomplish this, the Administration is seeking to:

1. Provide more flexibility in responding to local labor market needs for skilled workers;
2. Empower individuals to control their own careers; and
3. Expand alternatives for the post-secondary education and training necessary to succeed in virtually all of the jobs of the 21st Century.

**The Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

For those stung by sudden job loss or lacking proper education or skills, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) provides the framework for assistance. At the heart of the workforce investment system are One-Stop Career Centers. These locally based centers

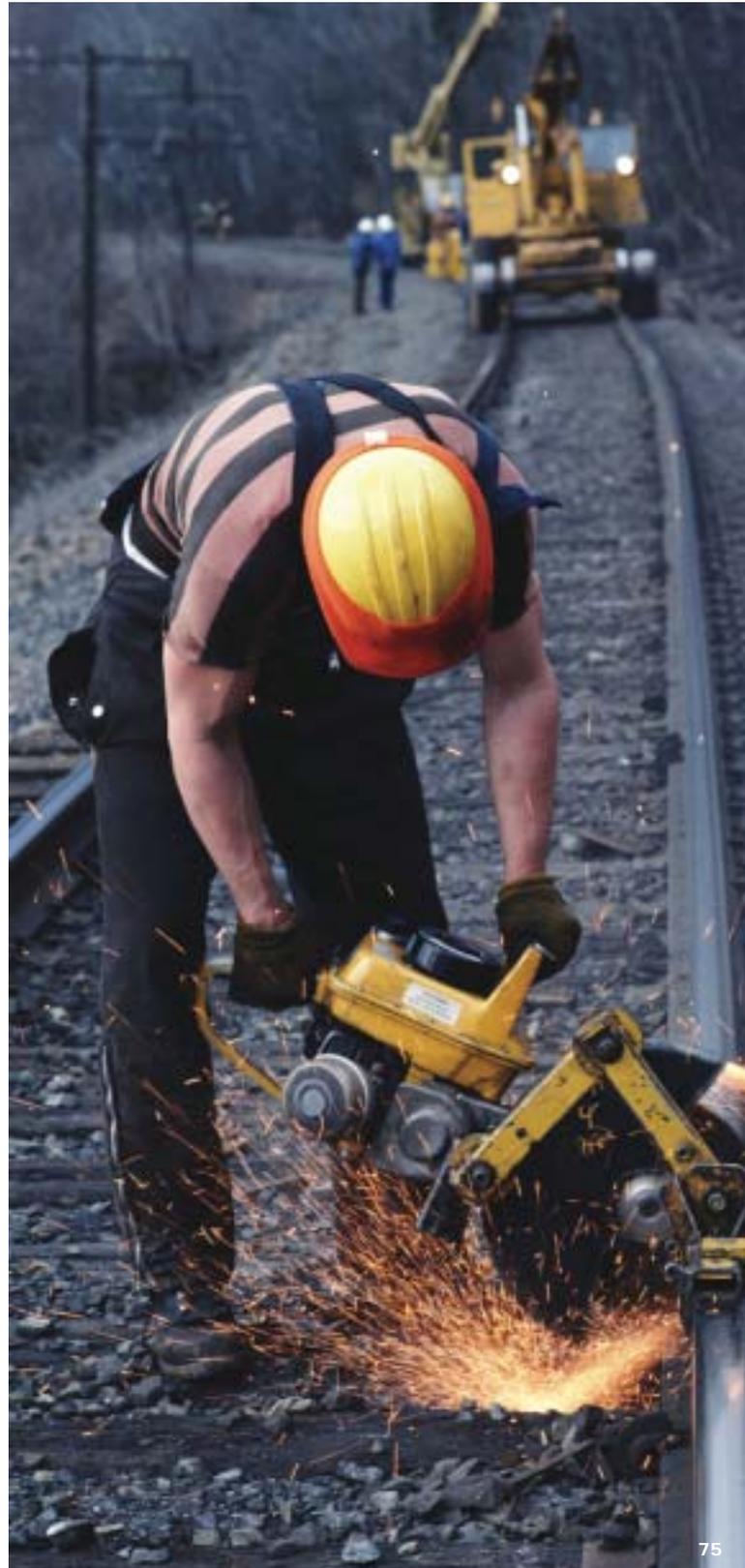
provide a comprehensive array of services so that workers, job seekers, and businesses can conveniently find the help they need under one roof in more than 3,500 comprehensive and affiliated easy-to-reach locations across the country.

At One-Stop Career Centers, individuals may receive:

- Core services, such as job search and placement assistance, labor market information, and skills assessments;
- Intensive services, such as counseling and specialized assessments; and
- Training services, usually provided through Individual Training Accounts that may be used with eligible training providers.

WIA also provides services to primarily low-income youth with barriers to employment. In addition, WIA requires cooperation between the federal-state vocational rehabilitation services program for people with disabilities and local Workforce Investment Boards, One-Stop Career Centers, and other WIA entities. WIA establishes a principle of universal access to WIA employment services for all individuals, including people with disabilities. WIA has, through its advocacy of standards of physical site and program accessibility, opened a wide variety of previously unavailable employment-related programs to people with disabilities.

Local business representatives oversee One-Stop Career Centers through community-based Workforce Investment Boards. These boards focus on strategic planning, policy development and oversight of the local workforce investment system, and determine service priorities for the community. These boards also



A Speedy Response Nets Benefits

**In August 2003, Pan-American Life Insurance Company issued a WARN notice for layoffs that would affect 100 workers in the company's New Orleans, LA office.**

**Following a downturn in the economy after the September 11th terrorist attacks, the company decided to close its pension operations department. The Louisiana Department of Labor's Rapid Response unit responded to the WARN notice by setting up an on-site Worker Transition Center. The Center's sessions spanned two days and included an orientation of the services, on-site completion of registration forms, a job search workshop and resume assistance. An impressive 73 of the 100 workers utilized the Center's services, and feedback from both the employer and applicants has been overwhelmingly positive.**



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*U.S. Department of Labor  
Annual Report, p. 99*

reach out to and welcome input from people with disabilities to ensure their participation in crucial local planning efforts.

Three programs under WIA help workers adjust to economic changes: the Adult Program, the Dislocated Worker Program, and National Emergency Grants (NEG). All of these pro-

grams are coordinated with the Unemployment Insurance program when applicable.

*The WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs*

The Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs provide a similar array of services, but target different populations. The Adult Program provides workforce services that increase the employment, retention, earnings, and adult occupational skill attainment of adult workers. In Program Year (PY) 2002, approximately 475,209 individuals participated in the Adult Program.

The Dislocated Worker Program is tailored to assist experienced workers who have been laid off. In PY 2002, 379,798 individuals received services under the Dislocated Worker Program. These two programs together provided more than \$2.17 billion in funds to states and local areas in Fiscal Year (FY) 2002.

*National Emergency Grants*

National Emergency Grants (NEGs) are distributed by the Secretary of Labor to temporarily expand state and local capacity to help dislocated workers by providing time-limited funding assistance in response to "significant dislocation events."

For example, not only did the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> claim nearly 3,000 lives, they also temporarily displaced thousands of workers. Upon receiving a request from the state of New York, the Department of Labor responded with a grant of \$25 million to run a temporary jobs program to assist in 9/11-related recovery efforts.

Other events, including major worker dislocations resulting from plant closures, mass layoffs, foreign imports, and those resulting from natural disasters, also create a need for rapid, targeted assistance. Employment-related assistance supported by NEG funds includes training, job development and placement, supportive services such as child care and transportation for individuals enrolled in training.

Timeliness, though, is the key to delivering assistance that is effective. A NEG application and approval process that a few years ago consumed several months now takes an average of 45 to 53 days. A goal to further reduce processing time to 30 working days has been set, and an electronic application process has been put into place.

One of the most significant plant closures where NEG funds have been used to assist workers occurred after the closure of Pillowtex plants in North Carolina and Virginia. The Secretary of Labor disbursed NEGs totaling \$18,425,760 to serve 4,581 affected workers in North Carolina (\$16,273,909) and Virginia (\$2,151,851).

During the program year that ended June 30, 2004, the Department of Labor awarded NEG funding totaling \$242.9 million to 47 states and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico. Of this amount, NEG funding totaling approximately \$47.8 million was approved for states affected by natural disasters. More than 2,800 dislocated workers were provided temporary jobs to assist in the clean-up and restoration activities subsequent to these disasters. Another approximately \$89 million was approved for 18 states to assist over 19,000 workers affected by trade policies.

With the enactment of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reform Act of 2002 by President Bush, the use of NEG funds was expanded to support implementation of the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC). This Act establishes mechanisms by which certain trade-certified individuals and other eligible groups can receive assistance in paying for qualified health insurance premiums. NEG funds are also authorized to assist eligible individuals with 65 percent of the cost of their qualified health insurance premiums until such time as they have been enrolled, processed and received their first payment by the IRS under the HCTC program. In addition, NEG funds are authorized to support the development of infrastructure needed by the states in carrying out their responsibilities related to the HCTC.

#### One Stop for Training and New Employment

**L**ois Harris was a dislocated worker from Century Tool Manufacturing. After visiting her local One-Stop Center to inquire about training programs, she enrolled in and completed a computer class. After finishing that class, she learned about the new DOL-funded advanced manufacturing Integrated Systems Technology (IST) training program offered at Rock Valley College in Rockford, Illinois. After completing the IST program in July 2003, with the help of the One-Stop Center, Lois found work at Rockford Toolcraft. She began working there on September 3, 2003.

*U.S. Department of Labor  
Annual Report, p. 102*

### More Choices for Workers in Training Programs

**P**resident Bush has proposed significant reforms to federal worker training programs to double the number of workers receiving job training, to ensure those programs work better for America's workers, and to close the skills gap so we fill every high-growth job with a well-trained American worker. The President proposed:

- Providing \$4 billion in Federal job training funds to the nation's governors with less federal red tape and more flexibility;
- Putting strict limits on overhead in major federal job training programs by closing loopholes and enforcing limits to ensure tax dollars support training for workers who need it, thereby reducing overhead costs by an additional \$300 million;
- Giving workers more choices about their job training by increasing the use of personal job training accounts called Innovation Training Accounts (ITAs); and
- Training an additional 200,000 workers through programs run by community colleges, unions, and businesses.



### *WARN Notices*

In our dynamic economy, many companies streamline their operations in order to maintain a competitive edge in the marketplace. While such actions help companies become more efficient, they also may result in the closing of facilities and the layoff of workers.

Under federal law, employers are required to provide written notice at least 60 days in advance of certain mass layoffs or plant closings. These so-called Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices assure that assistance can be provided to affected workers, their families, and their communities through Rapid Response and early intervention services.

### *Rapid Response*

When employers inform affected states, Rapid Response helps dislocated workers find reemployment as quickly as possible by responding to major layoffs and plant closings.

Rapid Response teams work with employers and workers to minimize disruptions associated with job loss. Services may include information on the local labor market, education and training opportunities, job search and placement assistance, resume writing workshops, worker transition committees, layoff aversion strategies and incumbent worker strategies, among others.

Rapid Response and early intervention services play an important role in the successful reemployment of laid-off workers and help communities maintain their economic stability by rapidly adjusting to the effects of layoffs and plant closings.

## Providing a More Flexible Workforce Investment System

The United States is a vast and diverse country that stretches from the deserts of the Southwest to the forests of Maine, from the sunshine and beaches of Florida to the glaciers and tundra of Alaska. No two states have the same geography. No two states have the same people. And no two states have the same economy.

But today, each of the 50 states must have the same workforce investment system to serve its people and provide for its economy. That is why President Bush is proposing to change the framework of the system, so that each state and local area has the flexibility to design services for its workers that meet the needs of its local economy.

## Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act

The first step in creating the President's proposed framework is the reauthorization of the WIA. When WIA was originally passed in August of 1998, Congress set a five-year time limit so that the legislation could be reviewed

and changes made to make the system it created more effective and efficient. The five years came to an end on September 30, 2003.

President Bush has proposed reauthorizing legislation that builds on and improves what works under WIA, and changes or eliminates what does not work.

President Bush's proposal embodies the following six key principles that should be enshrined in the new legislation.

### 1. More customer-focused and effective One Stop Career Center services

The One Stop system is an integrated delivery system for a host of federally funded employment and training services. It is an entry point intended to provide individuals and businesses with easy access to relevant labor market information and

services that are coherent and coordinated. Specific enhancements under the reauthorization should include:

- Improving access to a range of products and services, both in-person and electronically.
- Bolstering access to services through One-Stop Career Centers, including customers at risk in the labor market, such as dislo-

**As of August 2004, DOL has funded 47 High Growth pilot and demonstration projects totaling over \$92 million. These projects have affected 33 states, 41 Workforce Investment Boards, and 94 community colleges.**

cated workers, individuals with disabilities, current and former welfare recipients, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, immigrants, older workers, and school dropouts.

- Establishing easier ways for partners to share One-Stop Career Center costs.
- Encouraging states and localities to design and operate common information systems.
- Providing increased opportunities for faith- and community-based organizations to participate as partners in the One-Stop Career Center system.
- Increasing availability of English as a Second Language training and other services for Limited English Proficiency individuals through One-Stop Career Centers.
- Creating opportunities to try new ideas and service approaches.

## 2. Greater responsiveness to employers

Business is a customer of workforce investment services, a provider of training, and a leader and policy setter in the management of local programs. Specific enhancements under reauthorization should include:

- Increasing business use of the public workforce investment system.
- Informing the workforce investment system about labor market changes and the skills that are in demand.
- Identifying training programs that help individuals acquire requisite skills and cer-



Regina Whitaker, Forsyth Tech Biotechnology Graduate, Winston-Salem, NC

**R**egina Whitaker, age 24, worked at Unifi, a textile company in Yadkinville, for four years. Unifi, like several manufacturing companies in the Triad, was laying off workers, so Regina enrolled at Forsyth Technical Community College in a program funded by a biotechnology grant in the High Growth Job Training Initiative.

Regina entered the biotech program in the spring of 2003 and graduated in the spring of 2004. During her education she served as a lab assistant in the chemistry department and a work-study student for one of the instructors in the chemistry department.

tifications used by business in hiring and promotion decisions.

- Simplifying means of developing financial partnerships with business.

### 3. Clarified roles for federal, state, and local levels

States should have a greater policy role and more flexibility; there should be more local focus on program design, staff capability, and monitoring of program quality. Specific enhancements under reauthorization should include:

- Simplifying the governance structure and empowering states to use workforce investment resources as an economic development tool.
- Expanding authority for states to build on existing reforms to improve performance.
- Providing incentives to encourage state and local innovation and risk-taking.
- Extending state flexibility to shift funds within states based on documented need.
- Increasing overall focus on grant integrity and the safeguarding of funds through an emphasis on programmatic and fiscal monitoring.

### 4. Improved program performance

The system should focus on outcomes and results and use information on outcomes, quality, and customer satisfaction to drive change, making sure that data are valid. Specific enhancements should include:

- Establishing a core set of common performance measures such as employment, retention, and earnings that would apply across partner programs.
- Creating common definitions and reporting formats that encourage common state and local reporting systems for One-Stop partner programs.
- Providing significant incentives for states and localities to help individuals and businesses get the services they need, leading to higher performance levels.

### 5. Individualized opportunities for training

The workforce investment system should provide customers more choice, control, and customization of services to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are sought after in the new economy. Specific enhancements should include:

- Providing job training that leads to industry-standard certifications of skills.
- Simplifying ways for education and training providers to share information about their successes in preparing individuals for jobs or career advancement.
- Authorizing Career Change Scholarships, a form of Individual Training Account that would facilitate access to longer-term training consistent with needed skills and that would leverage other public and private training resources.
- Matching more ambitious program goals and outcomes with richer and more professional services.
- Encouraging co-enrollment among programs to maximize available training and related resources and avoid duplication of effort and expense.

## 6. Improved youth programs

Youth workforce investment programs should include a strong education component leading to a credential and to long-term attachment to the labor market and life-long learning. Connections between academic and occupational learning should be encouraged. Specific enhancements under reauthorization should include:

- Improving access to youth program services through One-Stop Career Centers, either through existing centers or special centers serving youth.
- Improving links to the local job market and other community youth services, including activities that promote youth development and citizenship, mentoring, and follow-up.
- Improving opportunities for out-of-school youth.

## Strengthening and Modernizing Support for Vocational Education

**P**resident Bush proposed to modernize the major federal program for vocational education, the Perkins Vocational Education program, to better serve the needs of the 21st Century worker. The President's proposal redirects \$1 billion in annual funding



from the Perkins Vocational Education program into a new Secondary and Technical Education program (Sec Tech) and requires that high schools participating in the program offer four years of English, three years

of math and science, and three years of social studies, in addition to their vocational education curriculum. The program would continue to support the work of community and technical colleges to prepare youth and adults for tomorrow's jobs.

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate have passed bills reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act. The Administration hopes that both Houses of Congress will meet to reconcile the differences between the bills and pass final legislation that promotes the key principles described above.

### President Bush's High Growth Job Training Initiative

A workforce development strategy that helps workers when they are down is too late. The Bush Administration instead sees workforce development through the forward-looking eyes of economic development. We believe a better strategy gets ahead of unemployed workers' plight by first identifying and then training them in the skills that employers and our innovative economy will demand of them. Our approach explains why we have been focused on bringing educators and employers to the table with workforce professionals so that they can collaborate to prepare workers for 21<sup>st</sup> Century careers.

The President's High Growth Job Training Initiative is a strategic effort to prepare workers to take advantage of new and increasing job opportunities in high-growth/high-demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. The initiative is designed to ensure that worker training and career development resources in the public workforce system are targeted to helping workers gain the skills and competencies they need to obtain jobs and build successful careers in these industries.

The foundation of this initiative is partnerships that include the public workforce system, business and industry, education and training

providers, and economic development working collaboratively to develop solutions to the workforce challenges facing these industries. Through the following roles, each of the partners will help to develop maximum access for American workers to gain the competencies they need to get good jobs in these industries:

- Industry representatives define the workforce challenges, e.g., getting career and skill information to young people who are charting their education and career courses; accessing new labor pools; defining core competencies for success on the job; training workers; building the capacity of educational institutions to train workers.
- Community colleges and other education and training providers assist in developing competency models and curricula to build core competencies, and train workers.
- The public workforce system accesses human capital (youth, unemployed and

Kennikqua Thompson, Licensed Vocational Nurse,  
West Houston Medical Center, Houston, TX

**K**ennikqua worked as a medical assistant for two years when the medical group she worked for closed down. She had always wanted to be a nurse but never had the time or money needed to pursue a nursing career. Through the HCA Cares Scholarship Program, part of the Health Care High Growth Job Training Initiative, she was able to achieve her goals of becoming a nurse and gaining job security. Kennikqua expects to gain advanced nursing skills, medication knowledge and techniques to help provide excellent patient care.

dislocated workers) and places trained workers in jobs.

To model this approach, the High Growth Job Training Initiative has initially identified twelve sectors at the national level that: (1) are projected to add substantial numbers of new jobs to the economy; (2) have a significant effect on the economy overall; (3) affect the growth of other industries, (4) are being transformed by technology and innovation requiring new skills sets for workers; or (5) are new and emerging businesses that are projected to grow.

- Health Care
- Information Technology
- Biotechnology
- Geospatial Technology
- Automotive
- Retail
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Construction
- Transportation
- Hospitality
- Financial Services
- Energy

**“America’s growing economy is also a changing economy. As technology transforms the way almost every job is done, America becomes more productive, and workers need new skills. Much of our job growth can be found in high-skilled fields like health care and biotechnology. So we must respond by helping more Americans gain the skills to find good jobs in our new economy.”**

-President George W. Bush,  
January 20, 2004



The High Growth Job Training Initiative is investing in national models and demonstrations of workforce solutions in these sectors designed to achieve the following outcomes:

- Targeted investment of workforce development resources and support for private and public sector partnerships to ensure the development of workers' skills in demand occupations based on industry need.
- Increased integration of community and technical college efforts with business and the public workforce system activities to meet the skills training needs of high-growth industries.
- Increased opportunities for employers to use apprenticeship training as skills development methodology, combining on-the-job training and academics, to ensure a pipeline of skilled workers.
- Providing workers with paths to career enhancing opportunities in high growth occupations. By expanding the local workforce system's capacity to be market-driven, responsive to local economic needs, and a contributor to the economic well-being of the community, the Employment and Training Administration is promoting workforce quality, enhanced productivity, and economic competitiveness.

By expanding the local workforce system's capacity to be market-driven, responsive to local economic needs, and a contributor to the economic well-being of the community, the Bush Administration is promoting workforce quality, enhanced productivity, and economic competitiveness.

The first action that was taken to understand and implement industry-identified strategies to

confront critical workforce shortages was in the health care sector. For the past nine months, the Department of Labor has taken part in forums conducted by associations representing thousands of health care institutions, and considered viewpoints expressed in-person by over 300 health care leaders. Solutions that were adopted as a result of eight forums now act as national models through the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative.

This set of solutions cuts across the national labor needs of the health care industry in acute care, long term care, and allied health care professions. It also addresses the unique challenges facing rural areas. On the whole, 22 healthcare grants totaling more than \$34 million are being funded across the nation. They are intended to provide genuine solutions, leadership, and models for partnerships that can be replicated in different parts of the country.

The second action that was taken to address employers' workforce needs occurred in the biotechnology industry. DOL hosted forums over the past year with biotechnology industry leaders, educators, and the public workforce system to learn about this new and exciting industry, understand the workforce challenges

that such a young industry faces and develop solutions to those challenges.

The challenges they face, however, are far too complex for one institution or industry sector to solve alone. DOL is supporting comprehensive business, education, and workforce development partnerships. These

have developed innovative approaches that address the workforce needs of business while effectively helping workers find good jobs and promising career pathways in the biotechnology industry.

Overall, ten biotech grants totaling more than \$18 million are

being funded across the nation. They are intended to provide genuine solutions, leadership and models for partnerships that can be replicated in different parts of the country.

For both industries, the solutions to their workforce challenges can be broadly categorized under the following areas:

- Expanding the pipeline of youth entering the professions;
- Identifying alternative labor pools such as immigrants, veterans, and older workers that can be tapped and trained;

**We need to close the skills gap in America. 60 percent of the new jobs require post-secondary education, which is currently held by only one-third of America's workforce.**

- Developing alternative training strategies for educating and training professionals, such as apprenticeship, distance learning, and accelerated training;
- Developing tools and curriculum for enhancing the skills of professionals for nationwide distribution;
- Enhancing the capacity of educational institutions through increased numbers of qualified faculty and new models for training;
- Developing strategies to retain and help current health care workers move into higher level positions in shortage areas;
- Helping workers in declining industries build on existing skills and train for health care professions.

### **The President's Job Training Reform Proposal**

As the world becomes a true global economy where labor from one country must compete against the labor available in every other

country, the importance of education and training becomes magnified. Recognizing this and building on the experiences of the High Growth Job Training Initiative and the proposal to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act, President Bush announced on April 5, 2004, an over-arching reform and redesign proposal for the workforce investment system.

The President's Job Training Reform Proposal is a vision for how the workforce investment system needs to operate to remain effective in this global economy. It builds on the flexibility proposed under the Workforce Investment Act reauthorization proposal and challenges the workforce investment system to double the number of individuals trained by reducing administrative and infrastructure costs and expanding access to Innovation Training Accounts.

These proposed Innovation Training Accounts would provide workers with more flexible and



Better Education for Better Jobs

**T**he President's initiatives will result in more students graduating from high schools and colleges with the skills they need to compete for the jobs of the 21st Century. Encouraging more students to pursue math and science will also help the United States continue to lead the world in innovation and will result in better jobs and a brighter economic future for young Americans. With a better trained and better educated workforce, America will continue to be the best place in the world to do business. The President's plan strengthens and modernizes vocational and technical education, expands math and science education for all students, enables more low-income students to pursue degrees in math and science, and enables educators to determine whether high schools are graduating students with the skills they need to succeed.



responsive assistance. Workers would have more job training choices — they would be able to use community colleges, private-sector training providers, local businesses, or community organizations — to get the help they need in the most effective and efficient way possible. These ITAs would allow workers considerable flexibility to tailor training programs to meet their needs.

The Workforce Investment Act reauthorization proposal, the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative, and the President's Job Training Reform Proposal all seek to change the workforce investment system so that it is best positioned to serve our nation's businesses and our nation's workers as they compete in this global economy. As the next section highlights, serving America's workers does not mean that the workforce system makes all the decisions. Instead it provides individuals with the tools and information so that they can make the decisions that are best for themselves.

**Empowering Individuals to Control Their Own Careers**

Americans are better off when they make the decisions that affect their lives rather than having government make those decisions.

**Reforming the Workforce Investment Act would maximize the available Federal dollars going to workers and eliminate unnecessary overhead costs by \$300 million.**

They can weigh the options before them and make whatever decision is best given individual circumstances. Citizens need material to make informed decisions and tools to carry out their plans.

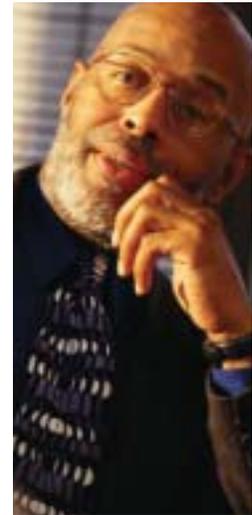
### Personal Reemployment Accounts

To empower people to take control of their own careers, the Administration has proposed a new way to serve vulnerable jobless Americans: Personal Reemployment Accounts (PRA). This proposal would make resources available to unemployed persons most at risk of exhausting their benefits. Such accounts would provide them the flexibility and means to get the training or assistance they most need to advance their careers. Getting people back to work, as opposed to increasing funding reflexively for ineffective programs, has been and remains this Administration's chief goal.

The FY 2005 Budget requested \$50 million to fund a PRA pilot project which would distribute up to \$3,000 to selected unemployment insurance claimants who are most likely to exhaust their benefits or have already exhausted those benefits. The project would demonstrate the value of providing flexible, self-managed financial assistance for unemployed workers attempting to return to the workforce as quickly as possible. For example, people would have the flexibility to use part of these funds for child care as they spend several weeks interviewing for jobs, while others may need to purchase a bus pass to get to the community college for training. In each instance, it is the individual who makes the decision on how best to spend that money.

Based on prior research as well as experience with the use of Individual Training Accounts

**P**resident Bush has proposed a \$50 million Personal Reemployment Account pilot program to help unemployed workers who have the hardest time finding jobs choose the services they need to return to work, including assistance with training, child care, and transportation costs.



under the Workforce Investment Act, the pilot is expected to demonstrate several outcomes:

- An increase in the number of workers served;
- A reduction in the amount and duration of unemployment insurance; and
- A faster return to the workforce.

These results will be accomplished through empowering individuals with the resources they need to secure employment and through incentives that promote finding and retaining a job.

Funds for the PRA project, which supports the guiding principle that resources and decision-making should lie with the individual, will be awarded to states through a competitive grant process.

Launching the PRA project as a pilot allows the system to demonstrate the value of the accounts based on outcomes achieved before deciding to take it to a larger scale. It also provides the flexibility to test varied designs and identify which models work best.

## Improving High School Education

**T**he President's plan will improve the quality of education at our nation's high schools and better prepare students for success in higher education and the job market. The plan includes the following initiatives:

- Creation of a Striving Readers Initiative to provide extra help to middle and high school students who fall behind in reading. The President's FY 2005 budget provides \$100 million for the Striving Readers Initiative.
- Increased funding for the Mathematics and Science Partnership Program to provide extra help to middle and high school students who fall behind in math. The President's FY 2005 budget provides an additional \$120 million for the Program.
- Expansion of Advanced Placement (AP) programs in low-income schools. The President's FY 2005 budget provides an increase of \$28 million for the expansion of AP programs.
- Incentives to invite math and science professionals from the private sector to teach part-time in our high schools. The President's FY 2005 budget also includes \$227 million in loan forgiveness for math, science, and special education teachers in low-income schools.
- Funding to make the State Scholars program, which requires four years of English, three years of math and science, and three years of social studies, available nationwide. State Scholars encourages high school students to take more rigorous courses to prepare them for college and the workplace.

### **The President's Jobs for the 21st Century Initiative: Expand Alternatives for Post-Secondary Education and Training**

With education and training becoming critical components for success in today's economy, the United States must improve the quality of education at our nation's high schools to better prepare students for success both in higher education and in the job market. Options for post-secondary education must be expanded beyond traditional four-year colleges so that alternatives such as community colleges are widely available.

President Bush's plan to accomplish this is the Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative. At the middle

school and high school levels, the Initiative includes an increased emphasis on math and science classes, expanded opportunities for Advanced Placement courses, and greater comprehensive reading instruction to help struggling students catch up to their peers in reading.

To build on this stronger education base and provide young adults with the skills needed to begin a career, the President has two higher education proposals that will strengthen the access to post-secondary education and training opportunities. The first is an enhanced Pell Grant program that will reward low-income students who participate in a rigorous high school curriculum. The second proposal is to establish Community-based Job Training Grants to build the capacity of community colleges to

become key workforce development training providers in communities all across the nation.

Community colleges possess certain strategic advantages that make them ideal as primary workforce training options. They have over 1,100 campuses nationwide and are easy to get to for the majority of the population. There are night and weekend classes, making them accessible to parents and working Americans who are available only certain hours for class. Finally, they have a flexible academic structure that allows them adapt curricula to meet the demands of our changing economy.

These advantages are extremely important. But they do not guarantee the training of a skilled workforce. It is only through the partnerships with employers that these advantages are fully realized. Partnerships among industry, community colleges and the public workforce system will be a critical economic development tool in every labor market.

And finally, to see that every worker has the opportunity to access these services, more funding will be devoted to Innovation Training

Accounts so more workers can access the education and training they need to access good jobs and career opportunities. Together, the President's Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative will better prepare students and workers for the global economy by improving high school in the core areas of reading, math, and science and strengthening the opportunities for post-secondary job training.

### **CareerVoyages.Gov**

To empower individuals to take control of their own careers, the Administration has provided more and better career information to young people, their parents, guidance counselors and transitioning workers through a new web site, [www.careervoyages.gov](http://www.careervoyages.gov), produced in partnership with the Department of Education. The web site takes new and transitioning workers on a "roadtrip" to discover the career opportunities of today and tomorrow, with the education and skills required to travel successfully.

Career Voyages provides career information and choices for varying levels of education or training background. Career information on the site includes:

**The President's Jobs for the 21st Century Initiative includes a \$250 million proposal to help America's community colleges train 100,000 additional workers for the industries that are creating the most new jobs.**

- Occupations that are growing fastest nationally and within each state, as well as emerging and evolving industries;
- Career ladders within each high growth industry;
- Skills, education, and training required for these positions;
- Detailed occupational reports including wages, growth rates, and licensing requirements;
- Career videos, as well as links to actual job descriptions and jobs in their local community; and
- Specialized resources for youth, career changers, adults, and career advisors.

Although some career paths described on the web site require a four-year degree, Career Voyages has something for everyone, whether they have a high school diploma, on-the-job training, apprenticeship certification, vocational certificates, or two-year professional degree programs at community colleges. These can all lead to promising careers.

### **Conclusion**

For over two centuries, the United States has overcome all the obstacles placed in its path and matured to become the world's leading economy. We accomplished this through the strength of our people and the commitment of our nation to freedom and opportunity. It is these traits that will carry us through this transition and make us a stronger, more vibrant nation; one that continues to drive the world's economy for the next century.

